

The unit breakdown is the most important time management tool you prepare. You use it to make the rehearsal schedules and to track progress in each rehearsal.

Creating the unit breakdown

You divide the script into sections for rehearsal. The most common way is to use a French scene structure. The structure divides the play into scenes that begin with the entrance of a new character or exit of one of the existing characters. If your script is written in this fashion, your job is quite easy. The example below uses this structure. Each French scene is a unit.

You can create two different breakdowns quickly. The first is for you.

| Unit No. | Pages | Characters | Run | Rehearse | Notes |
|----------|-------|-------------------------------------|------|----------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | 7-9 | Ms. Blinker (Fidge, Hadley) | 2m-h | | get props asap for business |
| 2 | 9-12 | Ms. Blinker, Baxter (Sophia, Tippy) | 4m-h | | |
| 3 | 13-14 | Sophia, Tippy | 3m-h | | |
| 4 | 15-17 | Fidge, Hadley (Tippy) | 3m-h | | rehearse kiss early |
| 5 | 18-20 | Max, Ms. Blinker (Hadley) | 3m-h | | |
| 6 | 20-21 | Max, Sophia | 1m-h | | rehearse slap early |

If a character's name is in brackets, it means (s)he has a very small part in the scene, perhaps without dialogue. It's a time management tool. If they don't do much in the scene, they would probably stand around for the first rehearsal or so. You use it to allow the actor to come after the first one or two rehearsals; it's a great way to respect the actor's time.

The **Run** column uses the one-minute rule is used to calculate the rehearsal time needed for each unit. **2m-h** means, 'two minutes, two hours.'

The **Rehearse** column is blank. You keep track of the number of times you've rehearsed the unit and the length of each time. It's how you meet your goal of enough rehearsal hours per unit.

The **Notes** column may be blank or may have some notes that change as rehearsals continue. You keep the template and add new information as needed.

If you discover columns that are more meaningful, use them. You must design the breakdown to best serve the occasion.

The second example is one that you hand out to the cast.

| Unit No. | Pages | Characters | Starting |
|----------|-------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 | 7-9 | Ms. Blinker (Fidge, Hadley) | Blinker – Good morning. |
| 2 | 9-12 | Baxter, Ms. Blinker | Baxter – It really is a shame. |
| 3 | 13-14 | Tippy, Sophia | Tippy – Hey you! |
| 4 | 15-17 | Fidge, Hadley (Tippy) | Fidge – Not yet. |
| 5 | 18-20 | Ms. Blinker, Max (Hadley) | Blinker – Good... |
| 6 | 20-21 | Max, Sophia | Max – My watch? |

As a quick reference tool, the **starting** column lists the character and the start of the first line of the unit.

At the end of the breakdown process you have very valuable tools:

- A rehearsal script ready to go
- A unit breakdown
- All the scenes for the auditions

Good work! Take a moment to bask in the glow of your accomplishments.